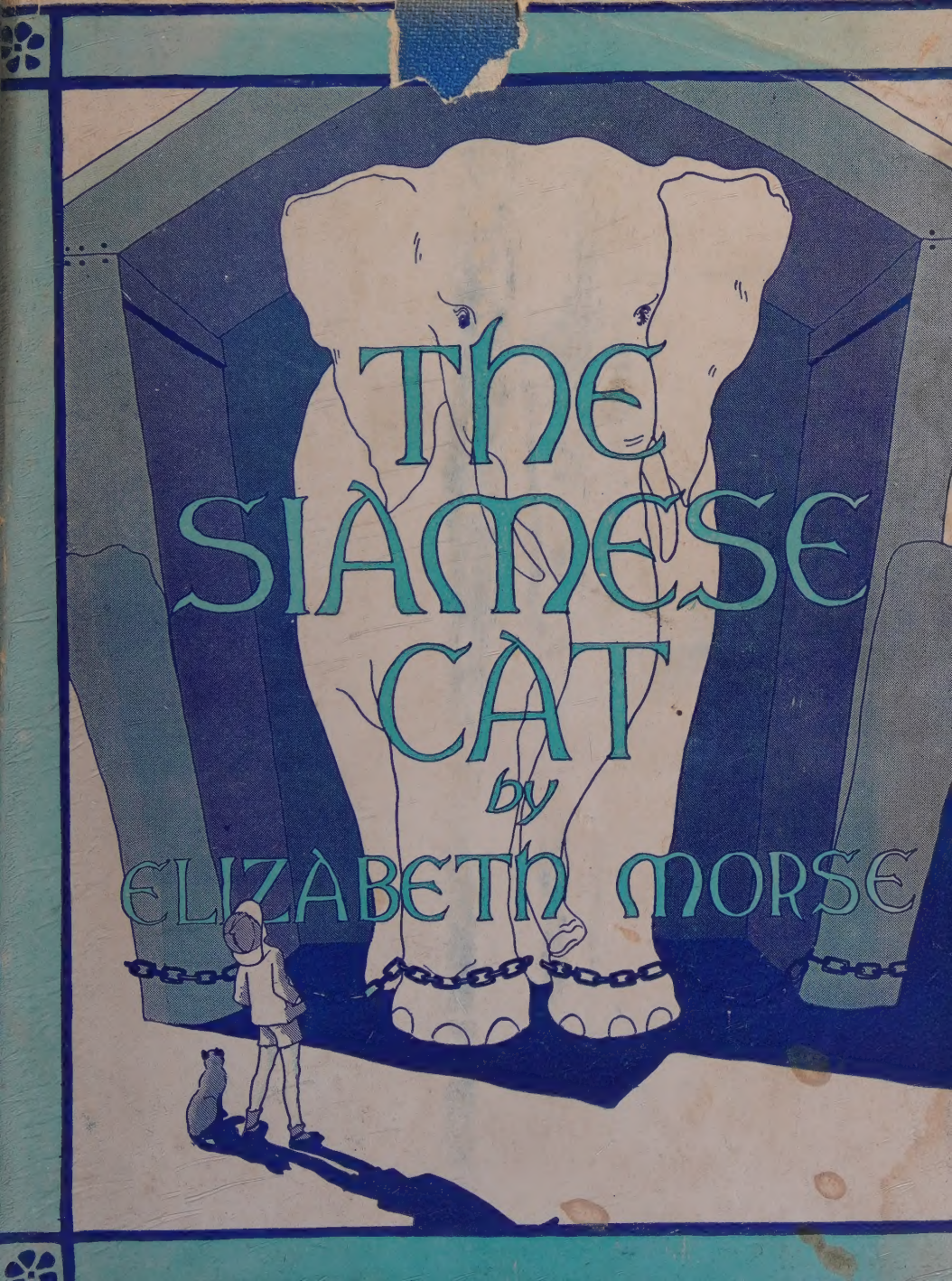

THE
SIAMESE
CAT
by
ELIZABETH MORSE

The Siamese Cat

By

ELIZABETH MORSE

Decorated by Ruth Seymour

David Laurie, a little American boy in Bangkok, Siam, receives a Magic Topee from the Tree Fairies which enables him to understand the language of the animals. The Siamese cat tells him of a wonderful treasure to be found under the Sleeping Giant of Wat-Po. However, the only key which will unlock the door to the mystery *is* no key, and the secret of the treasure is in the keeping of the Royal Elephant, Chang.

How David and the Siamese cat find the treasure, and what it turns out to be, makes an enthralling story for boys and girls.

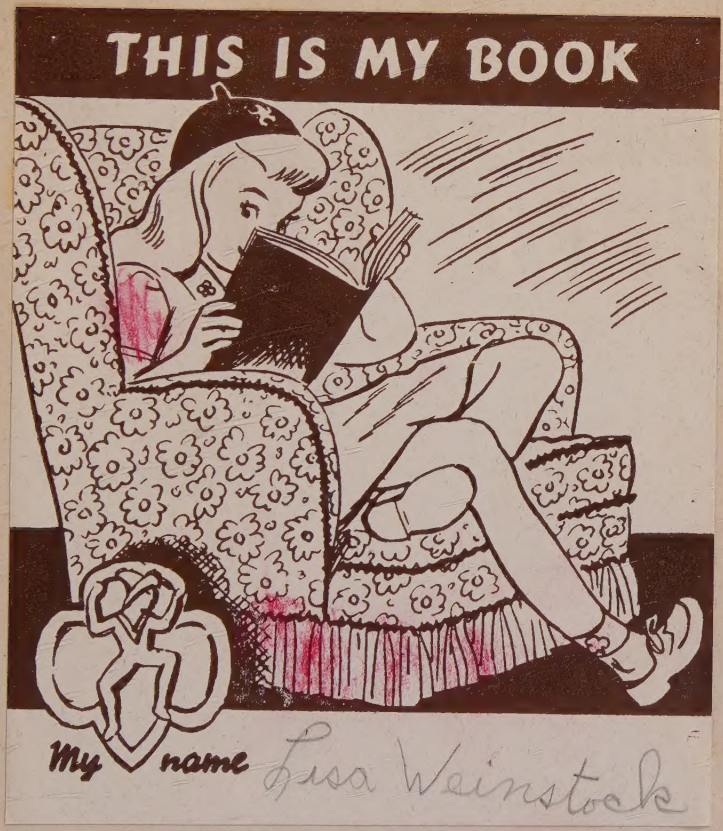
The artist, as well as the author, has lived in Bangkok, and has transferred the warm, exotic atmosphere of that Oriental city to the pages of the book in startling black and white drawings.

E. P. DUTTON & CO., Inc.

New York

(F-1219) (Ages 6-10)

Suitable to read to children, ages 3-6.


THIS IS MY BOOK
My name
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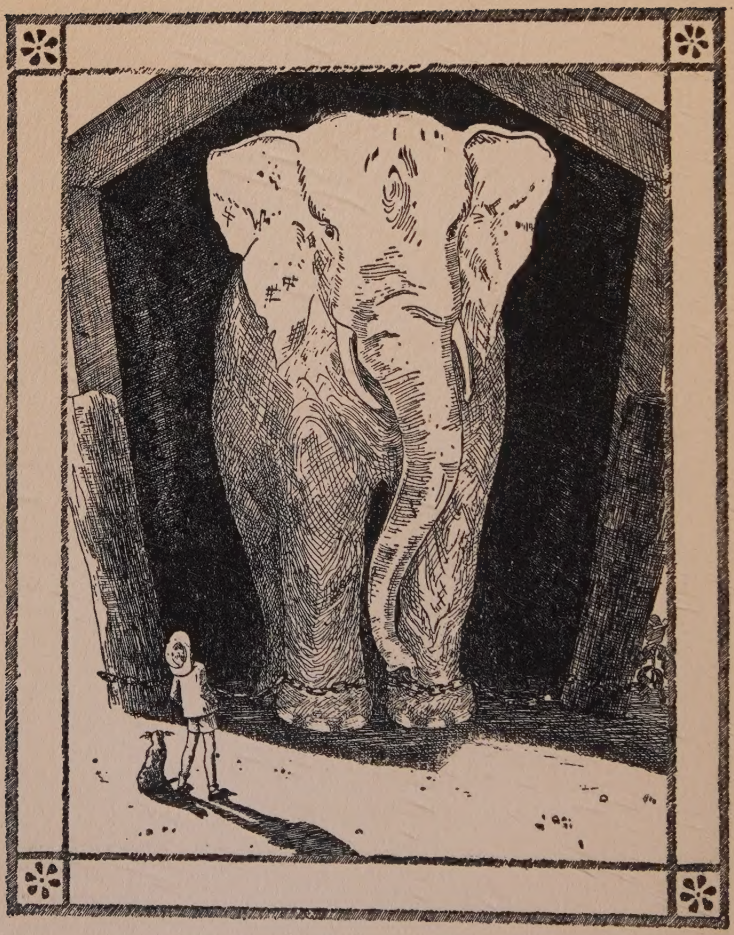
The
Siamese Cat



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ILLUSTRATED BY RUTH SEYMOUR

E.P. DUTTON & CO., INC

NEW YORK

The Siamese Cat

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To David and Teddy

The Siamese Cat

IT WAS David Laurie's first morning in his Siamese home, where he had gone to live with his father and mother.

After breakfast his mother put on his sun-hat, called a *topee,* that was exactly like a fireman's helmet, and he ran out to see what a Siamese garden was like.

The first thing he saw was an old man who was cutting the grass with a scythe.

"Good morning, young master," said the old man, grinning and showing two rows of teeth that were as black as coal.

"What makes your teeth so black?" asked David, who always wanted to know everything.

"This," said the old man, holding up a piece of betel-nut, that looked like a chestnut. He rolled it in a moist leaf, daubed it with a bit of pink lime, and popped it into his mouth—and chewed, and chewed, and chewed. Then he spat, and it was like red paint.

"Ugh!" said David, wrinkling up his nose in disgust. "It's horrid, and it makes your teeth all black, like coal."

"And your teeth are all white—just like a dog's," said the old man, wrinkling his nose in turn.

"I like having white teeth," said David.

"And Siamese like black teeth—so there you are," said the old man as he went on cutting the grass.

David looked around the garden. It was the strangest place—everything looked like something else. There were tall trees that looked like feather dusters, but David saw cocoanuts growing in a cluster under the leaves, so he knew they were palm trees; and there were trees that looked like big palm-leaf fans, big enough for a giant.

The old man laid down his scythe and mopped his head with a bit of cloth. "Like to see the bread-fruit trees?" he asked.

"Real bread-fruit trees?" asked David. "Oh, yes!"

The old man led the way, and David trotted after him, looking this way and that for the bread-fruit trees. He expected to see neat loaves of bread hanging from the branches, but not a single loaf, nor even a single slice, was to be seen.

"There!" said the old man at last, pointing to a tree with green fruit on it as large as David's head.

"That's the bread-fruit tree."

"But it isn't bread at all," said David disappointedly.

"No, it isn't bread, but it is very good fruit," said the old man laughing. "Well, come along and see the rain-trees."

David trotted after the old man once more, down winding paths, until they came to the rain-trees.

"There you are," said the old man, "that is a rain-tree."

David looked at it curiously. It had little leaves in pairs, and they were tightly folded together, so that the tree looked as though it were sleeping, with its eyes tight closed.

"Does it really make rain?" David asked at last.

"Oh, no, it doesn't *make* rain," said the old man, "but when it is going to rain the rain-tree knows, before anyone else, and all the little leaves open wide."

"Gee!" said David. "Just like an umbrella. When the sun shines it's closed, and when it rains it opens."

"Exactly," said the old man.

And then he showed David the durian trees with their fruit as large as a watermelon, which smells so badly that you would think it was made of gasoline and cheese. But the old man said it had a lovely taste, like custard, and that tigers simply loved it, and gobbled it up whenever they got a chance.

Then the old man mopped his head again, for

it was very hot, and said, "Well, now I must go and feed the fairies," in just such a tone as you would say, "Well, now I must go and feed the dog."

"Feed the fairies!" David exclaimed, looking at the old man to see if he were joking. After seeing bread-fruit trees that had no bread, and rain-trees that didn't rain, he didn't know quite what to expect.

"Why certainly," said the old man, "don't you feed the fairies in your country?"

"No," said David, "we *never* do; most people don't even believe in fairies."

"Well, no wonder you have wars and troubles of all kinds, if you don't look after your fairies; that's all *I* can say. We Siamese know better than that. Every garden has its little house for the fairies to live in; we look after them, and they look after us."

"Do you mean that?" asked David, still not quite believing.

"Of course, I do. Come along and I will show you where they live."

In a few moments they came to a great spreading tree that was covered with scarlet blossoms, and in the branches of the tree, just low enough for David to look into comfortably when he stood on tip-toe, was the cunningest little house. It was no bigger than a bird cage and had a thatched roof of palm leaves and a little veranda, all complete.

"There, master, there is where the tree fairies live," said the old man.

"Oh!" said David. "It's like a doll's house. Do you ever *see* the fairies?"

"No," said the old man, "I never see them, but I put rice here every day, and it is always taken away, and who would take it, if it were not the fairies?"

Birds might, thought David, but he was too polite to say so.

Then the old man extracted a few grains of boiled rice from a fold in his belt, and placed it carefully on a little dish that was already on the veranda, and then he took a tiny piece of candle from his pocket, lighted it, and placed it inside the little house.

"There," he said, "now they have food and light. Oh, fairies are well looked after in this garden! Now I must go back to my work. If you stay here and watch, very quietly, you may see the fairies when they come for their breakfast."

And the old man bade David good-bye in the Siamese manner, by putting his hands together and touching his forehead with them.

No sooner was the old man out of sight than David heard a little voice crying, "Help! help! Oh, help! I'm burning."

"Where are you?" cried David, looking all around and seeing no one.

"Here! In the fairy house. Oh! Help me—I'm scorching. Put out the fire!" the little voice called.

David peered into the house. He saw the glimmering candle, and something that looked like a small bird struggling above the flame.

"Please put out the fire. Oh! Please—*somebody* put out the fire." The little voice was getting fainter and fainter.

David was frightened. Something's got to be done, he thought, and, as he could see no other fire than the candle light, he reached in and, with one pinch of his fingers, put out the flame.

Then the little thing that looked like a small bird stepped out of the door, into the light, and David saw to his astonishment that it was a Siamese fairy!

She was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. She was dressed in shimmery gold, and wore

on her head a tall crown that looked like the tip-top of a Christmas tree. She had little golden bells round her wrists and ankles, and two little curly wings on her back that looked like rose leaves.

She was breathing hard, and all the little bells tinkled and jingled in different tones.

"Oh dear!" she said finally, when she had regained her breath. "That *was* a narrow escape. I got caught in a cobweb, and the flame from the candle was getting hotter and hotter. If you hadn't helped me I should have been burned alive." She shuddered, and all the little bells tinkled again.

David stared and stared in wonder. "Are you a real fairy?" he asked at last.

She laughed at that. "Don't I look real? Of course, I am, and not only that, but *I* am Queen Chatra, queen of the Siamese fairies."

"Gee-e-e!" was all David could say; he was so surprised.

Queen Chatra sat down on her little veranda, and crossed her legs comfortably. "Well, now that you have saved my life, I must give you a reward. What shall it be?"

"Oh, I dunno," said David bashfully. The little fairy was so beautiful he was almost afraid to look at her.

"How would you like a pair of our seven-league boots?" she went on.

David didn't want to seem ungrateful, but he didn't really want a pair of seven-league boots that would make him walk seven leagues at one step—it was much too interesting right in his own garden. "Couldn't you give me something else?" he asked finally.

"Why certainly," said Queen Chatra, helping herself to a grain of rice from the little bowl, which she nibbled thoughtfully. "We have many nice magic rewards for good deeds, and you certainly deserve the best for saving my life. How would you like the invisible cloak? When you put it on, no one could see you."

David shook his head. "I don't believe I would like that. I *like* people to see me. Couldn't you give me something else?"

"Why yes," said the Queen. "We have many nice things, but you seem rather hard to please. We could give you the jelly-bean that would make you grow as big as a tree. Or we could give you the rose-spectacles that make everything look upside down; or we could give you the magic topee."

"A magic topee!" exclaimed David. "What does that do?"

"Why, our magic topees make you understand

the language of all animals, so that you could talk to them, just as we are talking now."

"Gee! That would be great," said David, who loved animals. "I'll take that. Give me a magic topee."

"Well," said the Queen, with a sigh of relief, "I am glad you have found something at last that pleases you. Now I will call my fairies and we will present you with the magic topee."

So saying, she sprang to her feet and clapped her tiny hands. Then, coming from all sides, flying through the air, David saw a host of little fairies. They were all colors of the rainbow. Some looked like leaves, some looked like the scarlet flowers on the tree, and some looked like beautiful butterflies. On and on they came, till the air was thick with flying fairies.

They hovered around their Queen, making obeisance by putting their hands together and touching their foreheads, just as the old man had done. Finally they settled on the little house and the near-by branches of the trees, while Queen Chatra told them how David had saved her life.

They sat very still, staring hard at David, who looked from one to the other, feeling as though he would like to pinch himself to see if he were really

awake, and not fast asleep dreaming a dream of Siamese fairies.

But they were real enough. When the Queen had finished her story, they all laughed and touched their foreheads in obeisance to David, and then fluttered round him, trying to kiss his cheeks; but David ducked his head—he didn't like being kissed even by fairies.

"Come!" said the Queen at last. "David must have his reward. He has chosen the magic topee; go and fetch it."

Quick as a wink, every fairy disappeared; not a single one was to be seen, except the Queen, who was still on the veranda of the little house.

Then, before you could count ten, David felt his own topee lifted right off his head and another one put in its place.

"Ah!" said the Queen. "They have done it. David, you are now wearing a magic topee."

David snatched it off his head and looked at it.

"Why, it looks just like my old one," he said, disappointedly.

"Don't be so hasty," said the Queen. "Look on the top. Isn't there a little button there?"

"Yes, there is," said David, "but my old one had a button, too."

"So it did," said the Queen, "and there were four

little holes in it for the air to go through, weren't there?"

"Yes, there were; I counted them. Oh, and this one has five holes," cried David as he examined the button.

"Right you are," said the Queen, "and it is the fifth hole that makes it a magic topee. All topees have four holes, but only magic topees have five. And now we must put the spell on it so it will work for you whenever you wear it. Come, fairies! Weave your magic spell."

Once more David saw the fairies. They came fluttering around his head, and flew, one by one, on to his topee.

"Don't be afraid, David," said the Queen. "Nothing will harm you."

"Oh, I'm not afraid," said David, and he stood straight, like a little soldier, and waited.

Pretty soon he heard the tiny feet of the fairies going pitter-patter, pitter-patter, like little drops of rain on his hat, and he heard them singing, in voices that sounded like the buzzing of bees, this little song:

"Round and round the rim we go,
Never stopping, to and fro,

While we weave the magic spell
For the good deed done so well.

When you wear this magic hat
You can talk with dog or cat.
This will only work for you,
David Laurie, brave and true!"

Finally, when they had gone round seven times, the song ceased. The fairies hopped off one by one, calling, "Good-bye David," and disappeared among the trees.

"Look, David," said the Queen, pointing to a strange looking animal that was walking toward them. "Speak to the cat, and see if you can't understand every word she says."

"Why, is *that* a cat?" asked David in surprise. It was the oddest looking cat he had ever seen. It had blue eyes, the color of forget-me-nots, and its nose and ears and tail were dark brown, exactly as though it had been dipped in chocolate sauce.

"Why, of course, it's a cat—a Siamese cat," said the Queen.

The cat came along, staring at David with its big blue eyes.

"Hello!" it said. "Here is a strange little boy in the garden. I wonder how he got in."

Now, of course, if David had not been wearing the magic topee, he would not have understood what the cat was saying to herself, but, as it was, he could hear every word; so he said, "Well, it's *my* garden and I can go where I like."

The cat looked surprised, and Queen Chatra laughed heartily and said, "You see, Mrs. Cat, David has been given the magic topee, so he can understand the talk of animals, so you had better watch what you say." And then, turning to David, she said, "Now I must leave you, but before I go I will grant you one wish. What shall it be?"

David thought and thought. The harder he thought the less he knew what to ask. He had a gun, and a sail boat, and a little motor-car, and a railroad, and now, with the magic topee on his head, there seemed nothing left to wish for.

The cat sat down and waited. Queen Chatra tapped her foot impatiently, and still David *couldn't* think of a single thing.

"Cat's whiskers!" exclaimed the cat after a time. "I know what *I* would wish for, if I had the chance."

"What?" asked David. "Tell me, maybe I'd like it too."

"Why, I would wish to find the treasure that's hidden under the sleeping giant," said the cat, licking her lips.

"Treasure!" said David. "What *is* treasure?"

"Oh, you know, gold and things that have been buried and hidden for years and years."

"Buried treasure! Gee! I'd like that. I wish for that—I wish to find the treasure that's hidden under the sleeping giant," said David.

Queen Chatra looked doubtful. "You have asked for a very hard wish," she said, "for even I, the Queen of the Fairies, do not know where the sleeping giant is. But I can grant you this much: *if* you find the sleeping giant, and the key that opens the door to the treasure, you will find heaps and piles of gold. All the fairies will help you as much as they can. Listen for their voices when you are in difficulty. Now, good-bye, and thank you a thousand times for saving my life."

So saying, the Queen entered the little house and closed the door.

WHEN Queen Chatra had disappeared the cat began lashing its tail in excitement.

"She has granted your wish," she said, "and we will go and find the treasure together. Cat's whiskers! Hurray!"

"But where *is* it? You haven't told me where it is yet," said David.

"It is a long story," said the cat. "Let us sit in the shade under the rain-tree, and I will tell you all about it."

David found a comfortable seat in the branching roots of the rain-tree and looked up at the leaves that spread over his head like a big green tent. He was a little tired, it had been such an exciting morning, and he was also very hot. He took off his topee and laid it on the ground.

"Go on," he said to the cat, "why don't you tell me about the treasure?" But not a single word did the cat say; she only looked at him reproachfully and then at the topee lying by his side. Then David remembered. Of course, he could not hear the cat speak unless he wore the magic topee. He put it

back on his head, and then he heard the cat say, "How can I tell you the story, if you don't keep your topee on? Now listen, and I will tell you all about it."

And this is the story the cat told to David:

"Once upon a time, long, long ago, in the Kingdom of Siam, there lived a giant who was as big as twenty elephants. He was a very gentle giant and loved children and animals. He used to lie stretched out on the green grass, and let the children play about him. They had great games, playing hide-and-seek, and running up and down his legs and arms, which were as big as trees.

"Now it came to pass one day that the gentle giant lay down under a tree and fell asleep. When the children came to play he still slept on, and, do what they could, no one could waken him.

"The King of Siam became very troubled, because he loved the gentle giant, and he said, 'Surely in all the Kingdom of Siam there is some way of waking the gentle giant from his sleep.'

"So he thought a bit, and then he ordered out his fire department. The fire-engines and the hose-wagon and the hook-and-ladder came to the place where the gentle giant was lying. They clanged their bells and blew loud whistles, and poured a big

stream of water over the sleeping giant, but all to no avail—he still slept on.

"Then the King of Siam said, 'Surely in all the Kingdom of Siam there is some way of waking the gentle giant from his sleep.' So he thought again, and ordered out all the priests in the country. They came with incense and temple gongs, and for seven days they prayed without ceasing and burned incense and beat on the temple gongs; but he still slept on.

"And the King of Siam said, 'Surely in all the Kingdom of Siam there must be some way of waking the gentle giant from his sleep.' He thought again, and ordered out his vast army, and they came with cannons and guns, which they fired over the sleeping giant, making such a loud noise that it could be heard all over the country; but the giant still slept on.

"Then the King said, 'Send the wisest man in the whole Kingdom to see if he can, by any means, waken the sleeping giant.'

"The wisest man in the kingdom returned to the King after a time and said, 'Your Majesty! The gentle giant will never waken from his sleep, because he has flown away from his body, and only his body lies there, turned into stone.'

"Then the King wept, and said, 'We will never

see the gentle giant again, but at least we have his stone image!' And he caused all the carpenters in Siam to build a beautiful temple over the sleeping giant, with great doors of mother-of-pearl, and the key to the door was almost a foot long, so big it was.

"Crowds of people flocked to the temple to see the stone image of the sleeping giant. They brought with them thin strips of purest gold, and covered the whole body with the strips, so that it shone like the sun.

"Now," said the cat, "listen well, for this is where the treasure comes in. The image of the sleeping giant lies on a platform that is as tall as you are, David, and in that platform is a little door that leads to the room under the sleeping giant, and it is in that room that the treasure is hidden."

"Gee!" exclaimed David. "Hidden treasure! And the fairy said I would find it. Let's go! I'll get a pail and shovel and my pocket torch-light," and he sprang to his feet.

"Cat's whiskers!" said the cat sharply. "Don't you know it would have been taken long ago if it were as easy as that—pail and shovel and pocket torch-light, indeed!

"Remember Queen Chatra said it was a very hard wish, and it was only *if* you found the sleeping giant, and *if* you had the key that would open the door, that she could promise you the treasure. Cat's whiskers! I could promise you *that* much myself! We might be able to find where the sleeping giant is, by asking all the animals. How are we ever going to find the key? By my nine lives it is going to be a hard job, for the key that opens the little door is a most peculiar key; in fact, it is a key that *is* no key!"

"Aw!" said David angrily, dropping on the grass again. "You're making that up. Either a key *is* a key, or it isn't."

"That's exactly what I said," piped the cat with a grin. "This key *isn't* a key, but it opens the door just the same, so it *is* a key! Only one animal in the whole of Siam knows where this peculiar key is,

and *that* animal is Mr. Chang, the *King's sacred white elephant!"*

And the cat looked at David, as much as to say, "There, what do you think of that!"

"Pooh!" exclaimed David. "I'm not afraid of the King's sacred white elephant. I'll just walk right up to him and tell him to give me the key."

"How *wonderful* you are!" purred the cat, rubbing her head against David's legs.

JUST at that moment a little green mangoe fell into David's lap. He looked up and saw a gray monkey hanging by one arm high in the tree over his head. The monkey was laughing, wrinkling up his little black leather face.

"Good shot!" he cried. "I almost hit your head."

"Ask him"—whispered the cat—"ask him if he knows where the sleeping giant is lying."

David watched the monkey swinging back and forth by his long arm while he peeled a banana with his toes, just as though he had hands on both ends.

"Hey, monkey!" called David. "Come here! I want to ask you a question."

The monkey dropped rapidly from limb to limb until he was just above David's head.

"What *is* a question?" he asked. "Is it something good to eat?"

"No, silly!" said David. "It isn't good to eat. It is something I want to know."

"Oh, goodie," exclaimed the monkey. "There is

something I want to know, too; so I'll ask *you* a question."

"Me first," said David. "Look here, monkey, I want to find the treasure that's hidden under the sleeping giant; do you know where he is lying?"

"Let me think!" said the monkey, and he scratched his back and he scratched his head, and seemed to be so interested in what he was doing that he forgot all about the question.

"Well," said David finally, "Can't you answer a simple question?"

"Sure," said the monkey. "I was looking for the answer, but I don't seem to find any. Now I'll ask my question, and I bet you a banana that you won't find the answer either. Now, *why* are human beings so much like monkeys?"

"Gee!" said David, and he was just going to say, "I dunno," when he heard one of the fairies whispering in his ear the answer to the question. Quick as a wink he thought: the fairies are helping me; this question *must* have something to do with finding the sleeping giant.

The monkey was making faces at him, and chattering his teeth in derision. "You don't know the answer," he said, "You owe me a banana!"

"I do know it," said David. "Monkeys are like

human beings because they both walk on their hind legs. Now you owe *me* a banana."

"Why, that's true. I *never* thought of that," said the monkey, and he turned three summersaults in rapid succession round the branch, and went swinging off into the trees calling, "Get your banana yourself!"

"All monkeys are liars and cheats," said the cat, as they watched him disappear from sight.

Just then a pony, hitched to a carriage, came clattering up the drive, clip-clop, clippety-clop, clip-clop, clippety-clop, right up to the door of David's house. A lady with a purple sun-shade got out of the carriage and went in to call on David's mother, and the driver led the pony to the shade of some trees.

"What about the pony? Do you suppose he would know?" asked David, springing to his feet.

They started toward the pony. Then David stopped and forgot all about the important question, for the driver was doing the oddest thing. He was building a bonfire right under the pony's stomach! The pony stood quietly while the smoke enveloped him and seemed to be fast asleep.

David could contain his curiosity no longer. "Why are you doing that?" he questioned the driver. "Is the pony cold?" But the driver, who was a

Siamese, couldn't understand a word of English and he only grinned, and went on piling up the dead leaves.

The pony, however, opened one eye and looked at David.

"Who says I'm cold?" he asked rather crossly. "Why, I am steaming hot."

"Then why do you stand over the bonfire?" asked David.

"The smoke keeps the mosquitoes away," answered the pony. "Pesky little things, they bite me all over at once," and he kicked out viciously with his hind leg.

The cat jumped. "Ask him about the sleeping giant," she said in an agitated whisper. "I don't like his hoofs; he seems to have so many of them."

So David asked the pony if *he* knew where the sleeping giant was, but the pony shook his head. "Nope," he said, "I never heard of him. Say, you seem to be a bright little boy, perhaps you can answer a question that has always puzzled me. I think and think about it, but I can never think of the right answer. Now my question is this: *Why* do I have to drag around this heavy carriage all day long?" And the pony shook himself as though he would like to shake off his carriage, and all the harness rattled and jingled.

David thought and thought, and he was just going to give up when another little fairy whizzed by and whispered the answer in his ear; so he said, "Oh, I know. You have to drag around the carriage so that people can ride in it."

The pony opened his eyes wide, and a broad grin spread over his face, "Why! That's true; I *never* thought of that," he said.

"We won't get any help out of this fellow," said the cat. "Let's get away. Follow me!" and she scampered back to the rain-tree.

"Well," said David, "that's two animals who don't know any more about the sleeping giant than we do. Here comes the dog, I'll ask him."

A big yellow dog came running through the garden. He investigated every tree and bush, in the way dogs have, and seemed to have very important business on hand. He scarcely glanced at David and the cat until David hailed him.

"Hi! Mr. Dog, can you tell me where the sleeping giant lies?"

The dog pricked up his ears and walked gingerly up to David, keeping a safe distance from the cat's claws—he knew how sharp they were.

"Never heard of him," he said decidedly. "Now I am going to ask you a question, and I hope you'll

know the answer. *Why* am I always, *always* hungry?"

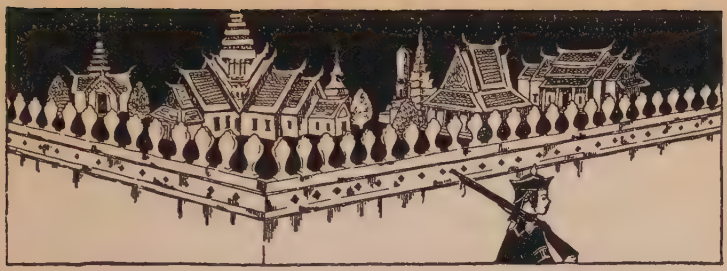
Again David heard the whizz of fairy wings, and the answer seemed to pop into his mind; so he said, "You are always hungry, Mr. Dog, because you don't get enough to eat."

"Gosh!" said the dog. "That's very true; I never thought of that!" and he went galloping off with his nose to the ground.

The cat yawned. It was growing very hot, even under the shade of the rain-tree. David thought a big glass of lemonade with ice in it would taste very good, so he said, "I'm going into the house. I'm thirsty."

"Well," said the cat, "don't be discouraged. Many things may happen before the day is ended. Remember, you have the magic topee, and the fairies are helping us."

David took one last look at the fairy house. The door was still closed; there was not a sign of Queen Chatra, and if it had not been for his magic topee with its five holes, David would have thought it all a dream.



AFTER lunch David ran to look for the cat in the garden. He found her stretched out in the shade of the rain-tree, looking as though she had not moved from the spot.

"Say, Pusssy!" he said in an excited whisper.

The cat stirred a little, but did not open her eyes.

"Don't disturb me. I'm having my afternoon nap, and I don't like being called Pussy," she said sleepily.

"But, listen! I'm going to see the white elephant, Mr. Chang, right *now*. My father's going to take me," cried David.

The cat sprang up so quickly on her four feet that David almost tumbled over with surprise.

"Cat's whiskers! You don't mean it! I'm going too. Remember, part of the treasure is mine."

"Oh, I can't take you—a great big cat like you. Why, we're going first to see the palace of the King, and my father wouldn't like it."

"Don't you worry about your father. I'll fix that all right. I'll eat a bit of cat-nip that will make me

invisible to all human beings except you. *Now* can't I go?"

"All right, if you are sure he won't see you," agreed David.

His father called, and David ran off followed by the cat.

When they were in the car David could see the cat so plainly that he couldn't believe that she was invisible to his father, so he asked him if he had seen the cat.

"Why, no," said his father. "What do you want the cat for? We're going to see the palace of the King."

They rode and rode, and after a time they came to the great white wall surrounding the palace of the King of Siam. A soldier opened the door, and the cat said, "Come along, David, we may find someone in here who can tell us where the sleeping giant is. Follow me!" and she dashed into the gardens.

It was exactly like fairyland!

There were beautiful buildings on every side, white as snow, with strange roofs of orange and blue, made in accordion pleats. There was one that looked like a birthday cake, with white frosting and wreaths of blue and yellow flowers.

David stepped up to it and touched it with his finger, and then he saw that the cake was as hard

as a rock, and the blue and yellow flowers were made from broken bits of porcelain, set in cement in beautiful designs.

The cat was watching him. "Fooled you, didn't it? You thought it was a cake." She laughed.

"What's it for?" questioned David. "Does the King live here?"

"Oh, no," the cat replied. "All these buildings are Siamese churches. We call them *Wats*. There is a beautiful statue of our Siamese god, Buddha, in every one of them."

"Gee!" said David. "What if we should find the sleeping giant here?"

"We'd have to give up then. Everything in this place belongs to the King of Siam. Oh, I *hope* it isn't here," said the cat, who was a little subdued by the magnificent surroundings.

Just then a Siamese gentleman came along and spoke to David's father. He asked him if he would like to see the Emerald Buddha, which was in a Wat close by. He opened the door, and they all stepped inside.

High on a great golden altar David saw the figure of a man, sitting with his hands on his knees. It looked like green glass to David, but the man said it was really one piece of emerald, the most precious of all precious stones.

The Siamese gentleman talked to David's father, and David and the cat waited.

And then one of the fairies whispered in David's ear, "Listen! David, listen to what the man is saying."

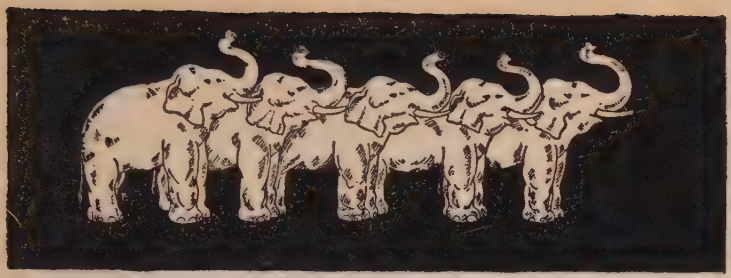
"That's funny," thought David, but he knew the fairies were helping him to find the sleeping giant; so he listened and heard the man saying, "You must go to Wat Po and see our great Sleeping Buddha. It is the largest in all Siam, quite as large as twenty elephants, and it is all covered with gold leaf."

The cat heard it, too. She jumped high in the air, but, of course, no one could see her except David. "It's the sleeping giant, David, he is at *Wat* Po. Hurray! Hurray!! Hurray!!! Now, all we have to do is to get the key that *is* no key, and then we can get the treasure," and she ran round and round after her tail like a little kitten.

But David wasn't so sure. "How are we going to find Wat Po, I'd like to know."

And at that moment David's father said, "Come along, David, and see the elephants, and then we will go to Wat Po; I want to see the sleeping Buddha."

"So do we!" The cat grinned, and winked at David.



THE five sacred white elephants of the King of Siam stand in a row, chained to thick posts by the legs, under an open shed. They are not really very white, but pinkish in color, with the light eyes of the albino.

In the Siamese religion, which is Buddhism, the white elephants are thought to be sacred. They walk in the big parades, all hung with beautiful silks and jewels, but most of the time they stand under the shed, where every visitor to Bangkok goes to see them and buys for them the sugar-cane they dearly love.

Every morning, soon after sunrise, they are taken to the river for their morning bath, and now and then one sees them on the streets of Bangkok—lumbering along in a dignified manner, as though they knew they belonged to the Royal Household.

Now, when David and his father and the invisible cat drove up in their car, the elephants all raised their trunks in the air and trumpeted loudly. David could hear them saying quite plainly, "Please give

me some sugar-cane, please give me some sugar-cane," over and over again.

Then the keeper of the elephants, a dark-skinned man, wearing a strip of cloth round his waist, appeared, carrying in his hands long sticks of sugar-cane.

David's father gave him some money and the man grinned, showing rows of black teeth, and handed the sugar-cane to David.

The cat was wild with excitement. "Look, David! The one with the tusks—the big one at the end—is Mr. Chang. Follow me!"

David couldn't say a word; he just followed the cat, and stood at last before Mr. Chang.

David had never been close to an elephant before, and when he saw the huge beast towering above him like a great mountain he was a little afraid. *He* was so very little, you see, and the elephant was so very big, and he almost wished he had never met the fairy and started out on this adventure.

He looked at the elephant's ears—they were quite as big as he was—and he looked at his legs; why, he couldn't even get his arms around them, no matter how hard he tried. His trunk was very long and very loose. It went this way, and that, all the time, like a big snake. At the tip it was quite small and soft, like a soft mouth—a very little mouth that

could pick up the smallest things quite easily, and toss them into the larger mouth that was right under the trunk.

But the cat was not afraid—not she! She sat down comfortably and tucked in her tail.

"Now, Master David," she said, "here we are! Walk right up to Mr. Chang and tell him you want the key that *is* no key."

David looked at the elephant again. He seemed very friendly, saying all the time, "Please give me some sugar-cane, little boy; it is *so* nice and juicy."

Finally David plucked up courage and said in a loud voice, which he hoped would reach the big flapping ears of Mr. Chang, "Please, Mr. Chang, will you tell me where I can find the key that *is* no key, that will unlock the treasure under the sleeping giant?"

Now when David said these words, the big ears of Mr. Chang flopped harder than ever; his trunk waved wildly in the air, while his head turned this way, and that, and he said in a loud rumbly voice, that was like far-off thunder:

"Who is this, who talks elephant talk, and asks me for the key that *is* no key, to unlock the treasure under the sleeping giant?" He stared hard all around him, and David didn't feel at all like calling attention to himself.

But the cat spoke up, "Now, Mr. Chang, this is a little American boy—David Laurie. He saved the life of Queen Chatra, and she gave him the magic topee, and promised him that he would find the treasure hidden under the sleeping giant. We know that the sleeping giant is at Wat Po, so you may as well tell him where he can find the key that *is* no key."

At these words Mr. Chang began shaking and shivering like a mountain of jelly, and he cried, "Never! *Never* will I tell where the key can be found. Never, I say, if I live to be a thousand years old."

Why, he's frightened, thought David, as he watched him reach for the cat with his long trunk. But the cat was quicker than Mr. Chang. When he swished one way, the cat jumped another, and kept out of his reach. As she jumped she teased Mr. Chang, crying "Fraid-cat! Fraid-cat! You're afraid of a little mouse!" in a most annoying way. David wished she wouldn't; he liked Mr. Chang.

"Why, are you really afraid of mice, Mr. Chang?" asked David at last. "You are so big, I should think you could lick any animal in the jungle."

"So I can," said Mr. Chang. "I am the strongest animal in the jungle, but mice have a way of running up a fellow's trunk. They are so little I can't see them coming, and suddenly I feel an awful tickling in my trunk, and *then* I know a little mouse is inside,

crawling and scratching its way right up to my brain. It's awful! Just like red pepper in your nose, and you know how *that* feels! I have to blow, and blow, and blow, before I can get it out. That's why I am afraid of mice, and *that's* why I will never, *never* tell where the key is that unlocks the hidden treasure under the sleeping giant."

"OH DEAR!" said David, completely discouraged. "We will never get the key; Mr. Chang said so. We might as well give up."

"Wait a bit," said the cat. "Never say die. Let me think." She looked rather worried, and sat looking at Mr. Chang as though she would like to scratch his eyes out. At last she said, "I have it! Listen to me, Mr. Chang."

The elephant bowed his head to listen, while he picked up a straw daintily with his trunk.

"You know, Mr. Chang, you have no better friend in all the animal kingdom than the cats, because the cats eat the mice you are so much afraid of."

The elephant bowed politely. "Why! That's true," he said. "I *never* thought of that."

"Well, then," said the cat, "I promise that not a single mouse will come and run up your trunk. I will see to that. So now tell David where he can find the key that *is* no key, that is, *if you haven't forgotten!*" The cat fairly screamed the last words.

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" laughed Mr. Chang, shaking and heaving in an alarming manner. "Lots you know about elephants, if you think we *ever could* forget anything.

"Ho! That's a good one—forget! Why, *I* remember every leaf of every tree I have ever eaten. I remember every face I have ever seen, of human beings or of animals, and if David should come back to this spot when he is an old, old man with white hair, I should *still* remember him as he looks today, wearing his little white suit and his magic topee.

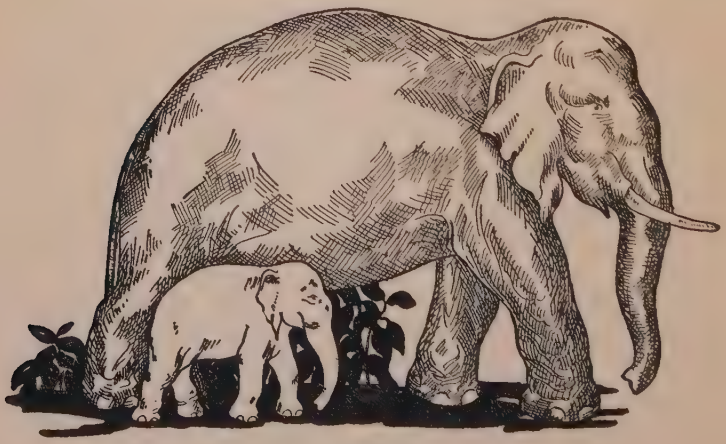
"Why, I remember when I was but a few weeks old, living with my mother in the jungle. A black man came creeping through the bushes one day and saw me as I stood under my mother's belly. He leaped high in the air when he saw me, crying, 'A white elephant! A white elephant!'

"When my mother heard these words, she looked at me closely, and felt me all over with her trunk. I was frightened and hung on to her tail with my little trunk, and then she said, sadly, 'It is true, my son. You are a white elephant! In a little while they will come and take you away from me, for all the white elephants belong by right to the King of Siam.

" 'The people of Siam think that a white elephant

is sacred, because the Lord Buddha once took the form of a white elephant. But don't be afraid; be a brave little elephant. You will be treated as one of the Royal Family, and even at this moment they are saying prayers in all the Wats, just because *you* have been found.'

"So said my mother to me. But I was very young, and very frightened at the thought of leaving her, and I begged her to take me away so they could not find me. She agreed to that, and we traveled many days, up hill and down dale, through the thick jungle. But it was no use. We were discovered again, and soon great crowds of men came crashing through the trees and drove us into a corral, and we couldn't get out, because it was all fenced in with big posts.



"After a few days they separated me from my mother. How I cried! They put me on a big raft and poled me down the river. I must say, it was rather pleasant. I stood on a golden platform enclosed with scarlet curtains. The platform was covered, knee-deep, with flowers which I trampled under my feet. They sprinkled me with perfume, and gave me jasmin water to drink, and fed me on sugar-cane and rice cakes, as we rowed down the river.

"I felt pretty sick after a while. You see, I wasn't used to eating all those sweet things, and I longed, oh, how I longed for my mother and the cool leafy jungle where we used to roam! I thought my heart would break with grief. But I began to feel better after a time, and even enjoyed the attention of the men, who looked after me as though I were a little god.

"After many days on the raft, we drew near to the city of Bangkok.

"I was transferred to a larger and even more beautiful raft, and we continued down the river. Crowds of people lined up on the shores as we passed; they cheered and waved their hands. All the bells in the city rang out, and volley after volley of cannon was fired in my honor. I liked it; it was great fun.

"No less a person than the King of Siam, himself, came to greet me when I landed. I was escorted to the Royal Palace under a yellow silk umbrella to keep the sun from my head. Hundreds of Princes and members of the Royal Family and priests and elephants followed after in a great procession. You should have heard the music, and the drums, and the cheering of the crowd—all for me!

"When we finally got to the Royal Palace, there were all kinds of ceremonies. This one gave me a golden chain for my neck, that one gave me a diamond star for my forehead, and others presented me with silk coverings and umbrellas, and all kinds of things you'd think an elephant would have no use for. I accepted everything—you never know when things will come in handy—but, as a matter of fact, I never saw them again after that day. They were all taken away by the keeper, and I was led to the Royal stables.

"But, after a time, they seemed to forget all about me, and how sacred I was. They put me in this old shed, with four other white elephants. The days pass, and the years pass, and here I stand, day and night, remembering my past glory and all the things that have happened to me.

"So, Mrs. Cat," said Mr. Chang, impressively,

"if I remember all this, do you think I would be so stupid as to forget that the key that *is* no key is *hanging at the end of my tail?*"

"Great jumping cats!" said the cat. "I *never* thought of that!"

DAVID and the cat ran as fast as they could to Mr. Chang's tail.

"Shucks!" said David. "There isn't any key there. All there is, is a bunch of hair."

"Ah!" breathed the elephant. "The key *is* there, just the same. Ho! Ho! Ho!" he laughed. "You're a fine pair to go hunting after treasure. You thought the big, stupid Mr. Chang had given the secret away. Ho! Ho! I did it on purpose to fool you. Why, say, you couldn't possibly get one of the hairs from my tail that opens the little door, because it only works by magic."

Mr. Chang smiled, and curled his trunk with glee.

David rubbed his nose. He was fearfully disappointed to be so near, and yet so far from getting the key. Then he heard the familiar voice of the little fairy whisper in his ear, "Ask him about the magic."

"What magic, Mr. Chang?" he asked. "What do you mean?"

"Why, the magic that was put on it when the little door was made," said Mr. Chang. "So absolutely

sure am I that you could never work the magic, that I don't mind telling you all about it. You see, when the little door under the sleeping giant was sealed, a very powerful magician put this spell on it: 'This door,' he said, 'can only be opened by a hair from an elephant's tail, passed through the ring, by one who has spoken with four different animals in one day. Not only that, but each of these animals must say certain words, and the words are these: *Why! That's true; I never thought of that!*'

"So, you see, Mrs. Cat and David, how *very* impossible it is," and Mr. Chang began to eat a stick of sugar-cane.

"Wait a bit; not so fast, Mr. Chang," said the cat. Then, turning to David, she said in an excited whisper, "David, can *you* count?"

"Yes, why?" said David, sharing the cat's excitement. Perhaps it wasn't so hopeless after all.

"Then tell Mr. Chang about the animals we talked with this morning. Count them, one by one."

"Well," said David, counting on his fingers, "first, there was the monkey—that's one. Then there was the pony—that's two. Then the dog—that's only three!"

"And Mr. Chang—don't forget Mr. Chang. How many does that make?" asked the cat, anxiously, who could not count.

"Why, Mr. Chang makes four," said David, triumphantly.

"And each one of the animals said the magic words, 'Why! That's true; I never thought of that!' You said them yourself, Mr. Chang; you *know* you did, and *you* completed the magic."

"Gee!" exclaimed David. "He did, he did; I heard him. So give me the hair from your tail."

Mr. Chang dropped his sugar-cane, and looked at them in astonishment. Then he raised his trunk in a perfect letter "S" and squeaked in a trembling voice, "Oh! You have worked the magic. I feel a hair from my tail slipping out. What shall I do? You will let loose the treasure that is hidden under the sleeping giant. What *shall* I do!"

To David's astonishment, a tear as big as a tea cup slid down the cheek of Mr. Chang.

The cat, quick as a flash, darted to the hindquarters of the elephant and picked up a hair that had fallen to the ground. She brought it back to David, who examined it curiously. The key that was no key was a hair. But it didn't even look like a hair; it was more like the gut string of a tennis racket, very thick and strong. David put it carefully in his pocket, and Mr. Chang said, eyeing it sadly, "Well, I suppose I must make the best of it. But remember, Mrs. Cat, you promised not to let a single mouse

get away. And David, my boy, the hair from a white elephant is very lucky. Always carry it with you, and you will not only find the treasure that is hidden under the sleeping giant, but good things will happen to you as long as you carry it. This is the very first time I ever gave a hair to anyone. May it bring you luck!" and he bowed politely.

"Ho!" said the cat, flicking her tail at Mr. Chang. "You didn't *give* this to David—it was taken from you by his magic. Good-bye, Mr. Chang, and thank you for your *lovely* hair. Come on, David, we're off to Wat Po, to find the treasure that's hidden under the sleeping giant. Follow me!"

THE temple of Wat Po, where the great sleeping Buddha lies, is only a short distance from the white elephants, and in a few minutes David and his father and the invisible cat entered the temple grounds.

A man came toward them, carrying a big key that was almost a foot long, and said he would open the door of the Wat and show them the sleeping Buddha.

David kept his hand on the precious elephant hair in his pocket. He felt very excited to think he was now in possession of the key, and that he was actually in the place where the sleeping giant was lying.

And then the man opened the door!

It was all dark within. A damp, musty smell came pouring forth. The cat, nothing daunted, cried, "Follow me!" and dashed into the Wat.

As the man opened the wooden shutters, it began to get lighter and lighter, until it was light as day.

Then David saw that the whole large building was nearly filled by the great figure of the sleeping giant.

He lay on a raised platform, with his head resting on his right hand, and all the figure from head to foot was covered with gold, except spots here and there where the gold had fallen away.

The keeper of the temple told them that the Siamese people thought it was a good deed to put gold-leaf on the sleeping Buddha, but the gold leaf was always disappearing, no one knew where. It was the very purest gold, he said, and the amount that had disappeared from the Buddha during the hundred years he had been lying there would make a great fortune.

David was greatly awed by the huge calm figure of the Buddha. It was so vast that twenty elephants could easily have stood on it, and twenty elephants, all rolled into one, would not have been as big.

The high ceiling of the temple was so far off that it looked like the dark sky overhead at night. The walls were painted, from floor to ceiling, with figures of men, animals and gods, in brilliant colors, just like a picture book.

David stood at the feet of the sleeping Buddha. They were as big as he was, and the soles of the feet were inlaid with mother-of-pearl. As he stood at the feet, he could scarcely see the head, so far away it was.

In the meantime the cat was busily hunting for the door in the platform, sniffing and scratching here and there. Suddenly she called, "Come on, David. Here it is!"

David ran as fast as he could, and, sure enough, there was the little door with the ring in it, just as Mr. Chang had said.

"Gee! It just fits in," he said, and his hand trembled as he slipped the hair through the ring. It stuck fast. He pulled with all his might. The door opened with a *pop,* and the cat flashed by, and disappeared into the darkness. For once she forgot to say, "Follow Me!"

David peered into the dark hole; he could see nothing, but he could hear squeaks and scufflings as of many mice, and he thought, that naughty cat is catching mice, and has forgotten all about the treasure. And then a stream of frightened mice came scampering out of the darkness, flying for their lives, past David, and out the open door.

"Oh-ho!" thought David. "That's why Mr. Chang didn't want the door opened under the sleeping giant. It is alive with mice—millions of them."

David was not afraid of mice. He liked them, and as they scuttled past him he became very angry with the cat, and determined to go in and put a stop to it. So he felt in his pocket for the little electric

torch he always carried, and, turning the light on the dark hole, he stepped inside, walking carefully, so he would not step on the running mice.

He found himself in a close, stuffy room. He could stand erect and made his way slowly, by the light of the torch, looking all around for the treasure. There was something soft under his feet that rustled like leaves when he walked, piles and piles of them, wherever he went.

It seemed to David that he had been shuffling about in the dried leaves a long time before he found the cat. She had each paw on a wee, struggling mouse; a third one was in her mouth, and all around her, in a wide circle, were the little furry bodies of hundreds of dead mice!

"Stop it!" yelled David with rage. "You are a bad cat. I hate you! Stop it, I say! Stop killing those poor little mousies, and tell me where the treasure is."

The cat glared at David. The light from his torch shown in her eyes, and made them look like a tiger's in the jungle. He was almost afraid of her.

Then she smiled, from ear to ear, and purred: "This is my treasure, David. This is the treasure I wished to find. What else would a cat's treasure be but mice—heaps and piles of mice?"

David listened in astonishment. "Do you mean

to say there *isn't* any *gold?"* he asked. He had forgotten all about Queen Chatra, but just then, although he could not see her, he was sure he heard her laugh and the tinkle of her little bells. And at that very moment a little baby mouse ran, quivering with fright, straight into his hand, and David heard it cry, in a tiny mousy voice, "Save me! Save me, and I will tell you where the real treasure is!"

David hastily slipped the mouse into his pocket, while the cat looked at him crossly and lashed her tail.

Then the baby mouse called out, in a tiny mousy voice, "Look under your feet, David look under your feet. *The treasure is there!"*

Quick as a wink David turned his torch so that the light fell on the floor.

Something was shining there, shining like pure *Gold!*

David stooped and picked up a handful, and then he saw! The leaves he had been walking through were not leaves at all, but strips of gold—the gold that had been on the figure of the sleeping giant. The mice had brought it there, nibbling it off bit by bit. There it was, right under his feet, heaps and piles of it, as far as David could see when he looked this way and that.

"Gee! It's gold!" he said, and was so surprised that he sat right down on the shiny floor.

The cat came up to him, trailing a long string of mice tied tail to tail.

"Cat's whiskers!" she said. "This is my busy day. I'm going to give a party," and then, as David was still cross, she went on, "Don't be cross, David. You see, we have both found treasure. If it had not been for the mice, the gold would not have been here. And if it had not been that I like to catch mice, *you* would never have heard of the gold."

"Why! That's true," said David. "I never thought of that!" And they both laughed with joy.

THE END

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